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Summary record of the 50th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 20 July 2015, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) ..... (Republic of Korea)

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(d) Human settlements (A/70/8; E/2015/72)

1. **Ms. Djacta** (United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), introducing the report of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat on its twenty-fifth session (A/70/8) and the report of the Secretary-General on coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (E/2015/72), said that with the world's urban population projected to grow by three billion by 2050, sustainable development would be impossible without harnessing the potential of urbanization. At its twenty-fifth session, the Governing Council had adopted seven resolutions, including resolution 25/7 on governance reform, in which it decided to strengthen the oversight of UN-Habitat during inter-sessional periods by requesting the Committee of Permanent Representatives to establish a working group on programme and budget. Also among the resolutions adopted were resolution 25/1 on the contribution of UN-Habitat to the post-2015 development agenda, resolution 25/5 on support for the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) and the role of national Habitat committees in its preparation and implementation, and resolution 25/6 approving international guidelines on urban and territorial planning.

2. The Secretary-General's report (E/2015/72) provided a description of the activities undertaken by UN-Habitat in cooperation with other agencies and organizations of the United Nations system at the global, regional and national levels. In particular, the Programme had contributed to preparations for the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which should result in a global commitment to sustainable urbanization and human settlements development. She encouraged all Member States to participate actively in the preparatory process for that Conference. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat had also cooperated with United Nations system organizations and other partners in implementing a range of activities, including the "Delivering as one" initiative.

3. The report concluded with five recommendations, which she urged the Council to consider. They called on Member States to continue to give appropriate consideration to the role of urbanization in their discussions on the post-2015 agenda; to adopt integrated approaches engaging all key stakeholders and levels of subnational government with a view to innovative, sustainability-oriented solutions; to ensure the alignment of ideas on cities and human settlements across the ongoing consultations on major global issues; to establish or strengthen national urban policies and to apply the recently approved international guidelines on urban and territorial planning.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*) (A/70/75-E/2015/55, A/70/92-E/2015/82 and A/70/92/Corr.1-E/2015/82/Corr.1)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/70/83-E/2015/75; E/2015/33)

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B, 60/265, 61/16, 67/290 and 68/1

4. **Ms. Verburg** (Netherlands), Chair of the Committee on World Food Security, introducing the report on the main decisions and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security (A/70/92-E/2015/82 and A/70/92/Corr.1-E/2015/82/Corr.1), urged the Council to endorse the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, which had been approved by the Committee at its forty-first session, and to ensure their wide dissemination to all relevant United Nations organizations and agencies. The Committee had also developed policy recommendations on food loss and waste in the context of sustainable food systems and on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition. The framework for action for food security and nutrition in protracted crises would be submitted for endorsement at the Committee's forty-second session.

5. In the context of discussions on the role that existing mechanisms might play in the review and follow-up of the proposed sustainable development goals, the Committee had been reflecting on its

effectiveness, with the aim of assessing the extent to which it promoted improved policy frameworks for rural and urban food security and nutrition at the global, regional and national levels. In that connection, it had undertaken an opinion survey, as a first step to developing a more comprehensive monitoring framework, which had indicated that it was on the right track, though more needed to be done. In the coming year, the Open-Ended Working Group on Monitoring would encourage volunteer member countries to pilot the implementation of in-depth country level assessments of the Committee's effectiveness. An external evaluation of the Committee was also planned for 2016.

6. **Mr. Acharya** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) (A/70/83-E/2015/75), said that the economies of the least developed countries had grown more slowly in 2014. Agriculture had continued to employ the largest proportion of the labour force. Labour productivity had remained low across all sectors, explaining to some extent the absence of any significant reduction in poverty rates. The outlook for 2015, while brighter, was clouded by uncertain prospects for the global economy, insecurity and political tensions, the prospect of adverse weather and climate conditions and, in certain West African countries, the threat of Ebola.

7. Progress on implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action had been mixed in all of the eight priority areas. Looking forward, priority should be given to productive capacity-building because it was critical for success in the other areas. Furthermore, it was necessary to improve the mobilization and allocation of means of implementation, including by improving the quantity, quality and effectiveness of official development assistance (ODA), strengthening South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in all areas and utilizing innovative financing. It was important to ensure that the sustainable development goals took into due account the issues critical to the least developed countries and that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development was fully implemented.

8. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the least developed countries, said that although they had regained some of the losses in economic growth experienced after the financial crisis, the economies of the least developed countries would decelerate for the second consecutive year, according to the recently published World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015: Update as of mid-2015. Despite substantial gains, many least developed countries were unlikely to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or the targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action in a timely manner. Unless the priorities and challenges of least developed countries were made the central focus of the sustainable development goals, the post-2015 development agenda would not be achieved either in those countries or globally. There was a need for a seamless connection between the MDGs and the sustainable development goals, as well as for increased, targeted international support for the countries left behind.

9. While the progress in infrastructure development and other areas described in the Secretary-General's report (A/70/83-E/2015/75) was encouraging, further national and global efforts were needed to sustain and accelerate the pace of those improvements. The least developed countries also needed strong resilience-building in the area of agriculture, as well as financial and technical support to strengthen their capacity to increase government revenues. Moreover, the least developed countries were disadvantaged in terms of technological development, acquisition and transfer. With few exceptions they were reliant on primitive technologies that did not allow them to address the challenges faced in key priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action. In that regard, they awaited with interest the report of the high-level panel constituted to assess the feasibility of a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism. The technology bank should be fully and effectively operationalized in 2017. The least developed countries were confident that their development partners would provide at least 0.1 per cent of their ODA for the effective functioning of that bank, and requested the United Nations Secretary-General to make arrangements for effective and timely realization of the panel's recommendations.

10. The least developed countries were deeply concerned at the sharp decline in ODA that had occurred in 2014, owing to cuts in the aid budgets of

development partners that had unevenly and unfairly affected those countries. By encouraging providers to allocate at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/gross national income to least developed countries and recognizing those that were allocating at least 50 per cent of their ODA to least developed countries, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda had set new development assistance benchmarks that must be met and followed up by the international community. In the area of exports, more progress was needed in granting duty-free and quota-free market access to the least developed countries. The Bali Package should be fully implemented and at least 50 per cent of aid for trade should be allocated to least developed countries.

11. The least developed countries requested the Secretariat to develop strategies for implementing the many specific measures, initiatives and mechanisms in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that were of vital importance to them, including the decision to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries. They requested a concrete road map for the operationalization of a one-stop arrangement, such as an international investment support centre, and requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures in that regard. The declaration adopted at the High-level Meeting on Global Partnerships for a Transformative Agenda for the Least Developed Countries, held in the context of the third United Nations Conference on Financing for Development, should be seen as an important toolkit for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the least developed countries.

12. The comprehensive high-level midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action to be held in June 2016 should launch concrete new initiatives and provide strong impetus for existing ones, building on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the sustainable development goals and the outcome of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, it should provide guidance for reviewing the least developed countries criteria.

13. The least developed countries called for enhanced contributions to the trust fund for monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and for further strengthening of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in order for it to be able to fulfil its expanded mandate.

14. **Mr. De Lara Rangel** (Observer for Mexico) said that the post-2015 development agenda must recognize the need for assistance to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing countries. As a provider of South-South cooperation and co-chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Mexico strongly supported the principles agreed at the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, namely ownership of development priorities by developing countries, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability of partners.

15. The President proposed that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/70/75-E/2015/55) and the report on the main decisions and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security (A/70/92-E/2015/82 and A/70/92/Corr.1-E/2015/82/Corr.1).

16. *It was so decided.*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/70/64 and A/70/76–E/2015/57; E/2015/65; E/2015/L.24)

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/70/82–E/2015/13; E/2015/L.22)

17. **Mr. Percaya** (Observer for Indonesia), speaking as Acting Chair of the Special Committee on Decolonization, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/70/64) and the report of the President of the Council on consultations with the Special Committee (E/2015/65). Only two organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the

World Food Programme, had contributed to the report of the President of the Council, by submitting information on their activities with regard to the implementation of the Declaration. He strongly urged other relevant United Nations system entities and international and regional organizations to do so in the future.

18. He expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for implementation of the decolonization agenda in seven Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean. At the regional seminar held in Managua, in May 2015, participating members of the Special Committee had stressed the need for the relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to engage with the work of the Special Committee and strengthen their efforts to provide assistance to the Territories, through the appropriate mechanisms. In that regard, he encouraged other United Nations entities, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to participate in the Special Committee's 2016 regional seminar in Fiji. The 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories faced numerous social, economic and environmental barriers to sustainable development which should be addressed comprehensively with the support of the international community and in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Draft resolution E/2015/L.24: Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations

19. **Mr. Percaya** (Observer for Indonesia), introducing the draft resolution, said that Indonesia and the Syrian Arab Republic had joined the sponsors.

20. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution, which had no programme budget implications.

21. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Colombia, Congo, France, Guatemala, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mauritius, Pakistan, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstained:

Albania, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Nepal, Panama, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

22. *Draft resolution E/2015/L.24 was adopted by 19 votes to none, with 25 abstentions.**

23. **Ms. Derderian** (United States of America) said that, as in the past, her delegation had abstained from voting on the draft resolution because, while it agreed in principle that United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies could provide useful support to territories that were not members of the Organization so long as the domestic laws and policies of the territory's administering Power allowed such support, it was the responsibility of the administering Power to accept or reject such support and to determine its nature. Under the Constitution of the United States of America, the federal Government had sole responsibility for the conduct of the country's foreign relations, including those of its territories. Her delegation was concerned that the language of the draft resolution infringed upon the internal constitutional arrangements of the United States.

24. **Ms. Ravilova-Borovik** (Russian Federation) said that her Government had consistently championed the right of peoples to self-determination. However, in its view, consideration of that very political issue distracted the Council from its primary function of coordinating the socioeconomic work of the United Nations, and it had therefore abstained, as usual, from voting on the draft resolution.

25. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that his delegation had abstained, on the grounds that the resolution should be implemented in accordance with the relevant pronouncements of the United Nations and the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and Special Committee on specific territories.

* The delegation of China subsequently informed the Council that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution; and the delegation of France that it had intended to abstain.

26. **Mr. Alami** (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, introduced the note by the Secretary-General conveying a report by ESCWA on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/70/82-E/2015/13). The fierce offensive by Israel against Gaza in 2014 had wreaked unprecedented death and destruction, leaving thousands homeless and children psychologically damaged. Concerns over the possible commission of international crimes had prompted the establishment of an independent international commission of inquiry. The destruction of infrastructure and farm animals had exacerbated the environmental crisis, worsened food insecurity, deepened already rampant unemployment and further limited access to medical care. In addition, recovery was stymied by the ongoing eight-year blockade.

27. In the West Bank, Israel continued to segregate and discriminate against Palestinians, making them subject to a separate legal regime, revoking their residency permits to achieve "demographic balance", refusing to grant them building permits, banning them from certain roads and pursuing construction of the separation wall. Palestinians experienced forced displacement, discrimination in the allocation of water and restrictions on movement that denied them access to half of their agricultural lands. They were subject to arbitrary arrest and detention accompanied by ill treatment and torture. Government-sanctioned Israeli settlement was accelerating, and settlers continued to attack Palestinians, their property and their religious sites with impunity, while Israeli citizens and corporations illegally exploited their natural resources and polluted the environment. Not surprisingly, food insecurity and unemployment were high. Access to education was limited by restrictions on movement and, in Gaza, by the limited availability of schools. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Israel appropriated Arab lands, usurped natural resources, restricted building and enforced discriminatory water allocation. Until Israel ended its illegal occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territory and complied with international law, there could be no prospects for peace.

28. **Ms. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the Palestinians in Occupied Palestine lived in constant, mortal fear of the Israeli army and terrorist settlers. Israel aimed to control every aspect of their lives, collectively punishing, intimidating and dehumanizing them with impunity. One year after the Israeli offensive against Gaza, reconstruction lagged, psychological wounds festered, and hopes of progress were rapidly fading. The State of Palestine urgently appealed to the international community to act immediately to bring about a lifting of the blockade and, moreover, to continue to assist the Palestinian people to achieve their rights and legitimate national aspirations, in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Organization's responsibility in the question of Palestine.

29. The ESCWA report presented comprehensive facts and figures about the many serious economic and social repercussions of the 48-year occupation by Israel, including the eight-year blockade of Gaza, and documented persistent, ongoing Israeli violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. To address the root causes of de-development and the dire socioeconomic conditions in Occupied Palestine, Israel must end its occupation and recognize an independent State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders. Only then could the two peoples live side by side in peace.

Draft resolution E/2015/L.22: Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

30. **Mr. Marobe** (South Africa), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was based on the 2014 resolution, with updates to take into account the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan, and issues emerging since the Council had last addressed the matter.

31. **The President** said that Turkey had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

32. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that the ESCWA report had shown once again that Israel had completely disregarded the hundreds of United Nations resolutions on the topic.

Israel had now placed the lives of Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan in unprecedented danger by supporting terrorist groups active in the area of separation in order to force them to abandon their homes or side with the terrorists against the Syrian Government. The world was well aware of that support, which had been amply documented in numerous United Nations documents, such as the reports of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, not to mention accounts in the Israeli media. The Israeli occupation authorities were providing logistical support, financing and food to such groups as the Nusrah Front, some of whose fighters had received treatment in Israeli hospitals. Israel had recently supported a series of terrorist attacks on the Syrian town of Hadar, in which dozens of innocent civilians had been killed. He urged ESCWA to mention that support, and its socioeconomic impact, in its 2016 report to the Council.

33. The ESCWA report conveyed to some extent the tragic situation in the occupied Syrian Golan. Israel was systematically displacing Syrian citizens, recruiting Nusrah Front terrorists to intimidate them and destroy their homes. It deprived Syrian farmers of water, which was made abundantly and affordably available to extremist settlers. It forced the Syrian inhabitants to use Israeli identity cards, and continued to impose its own laws in violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981). Without legal or moral justification, it had reimprisoned the Syrian Mandela, Sidqi al-Maqt, who had been freed in 2012 after 27 years behind bars. Extremist settlers had exploited and wasted natural resources, ruined farmland, uprooted trees and prevented Syrian farmers from selling their produce. Those and other racist policies were intended to force the Syrian inhabitants to leave or sever ties with their nation. Most recently, European and United States companies had been helping Israel explore for oil.

34. Palestinians and Syrians had suffered for decades under occupation because the so-called international community had failed to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its crimes. Whether in the occupied Syrian Golan or in the Syrian Arab Republic as a whole, the Syrian people needed immediate international action to confront Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups, not to mention the State terrorism practised by Israel in the occupied Syrian Golan. There was consensus that the coming phase in international development should benefit all peoples of the world without exception. If the Palestinian people and the inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan were to attain peace, stability and sustainable development, the Israeli occupation must first be brought to an immediate end, and those responsible for perpetrating or ignoring its crimes must be held to account.

35. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution, which had no programme budget implications.

36. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Albania, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, United States.

Abstained:

Honduras, Panama.

37. *Draft resolution E/2015/L.22 was adopted by 42 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.*

38. **Ms. Derderian** (United States of America) said that, as in previous years, the resolution was one-sided and failed to take a constructive approach that would advance the prospects of peace. The United States remained committed to supporting the Palestinian people in practical and effective ways. The United States was the largest bilateral donor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and contributed significantly to other United Nations programmes providing assistance to the Palestinian people. It shared the concern of the international community over the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and would continue to work with the Palestinian Authority, Israel and international partners to improve the lives of civilians. Her Government remained committed to achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle

East based on a two-State solution that established a viable, independent and contiguous State of Palestine living in peace and security alongside a secure, Jewish and democratic State of Israel. As a friend to both parties to the conflict, her country had no choice but to vote against the draft resolution.

39. **Ms. Carroll** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that the European Union wished to put on record that its member States considered the phrase "Palestinian Government" to refer to the Palestinian Authority and that, furthermore, the use of the term "Palestine" could not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and was without prejudice to the positions of the individual States members of the European Union on that issue and hence on the validity of the accession to the conventions and treaties mentioned in the resolution.

40. **Mr. Mikami** (Japan) said that Japan had voted in favour of the resolution, which urged both parties to take serious steps towards the resumption of negotiations. Recalling the many lives lost on both sides during the 2014 hostilities, he called on all parties and the international community to intensify efforts to prevent a recurrence.

41. **Ms. Meitzad** (Observer for Israel) said that the resolution and the report of which it took note conveniently ignored unwelcome truths. The terrorist Hamas regime continued to prepare for war and to indoctrinate the children and youth of Gaza, while the Palestinian Authority declined to exercise its responsibilities. With the international community dragging its feet and the Palestinian Authority unwilling or unable to assert authority in Gaza, it was Israel that ensured the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the residents. Furthermore, Israel treated injured Syrian civilians at its field hospital in Gaza as well as other hospitals in Israel, a fact about which the resolution was silent.

42. The obsession of ESCWA with Israel and its indifference to terrible human rights violations and bloodshed elsewhere in the region undermined the credibility of the entire institution. Its report neither presented the United Nations position accurately and nor captured the complexity of the situation on the ground. One-sided reports, resolutions and statements only served those who had no desire to engage in honest and meaningful direct dialogue. The resolution did not enhance cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians or improve the lives of Palestinians; it simply perpetuated the status quo and had no place in the Council.

43. **The President** proposed that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/70/76-E/2015/57).

44. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.